

Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

As we approach the end of 2024, we'd like to thank you for all of your hard work and dedication over the last year. We hope you find time to relax over the Christmas break. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



If you need any advice or support, please email the team on EYCC@worcestershire.gov.uk or submit a request via the [website](#).

Regards,

The Early Years Team

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Early Years Bulletin: Worcestershire News and Reminders

Nursery Education Funding

Spring Term Eligibility Codes

Any new Eligibility Codes for families joining you in the Spring Term should be checked on the Provider Portal before the end of December; this allows parents time to sort out any issues before the term starts. **So far, only 45% of new Codes have been checked.**

Eligibility Code Start Dates must be on or before 31st December 2024 and the End Date must be on or after 1st January 2025.

Eligibility Codes with a start on or after 1st January 2025 are not valid for the Spring Term 2025 and families will have to wait until the Summer Term (1st April 2025) to access their child's funded entitlement.

NEF Rates 2025/26

On 10th December 2024, the DfE published Local Authority early years allocations for 2025/26, which includes an increase in Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) of £0.32 per hour and an increase in the Disability Access Fund (DAF) of £28 per year.

Information about the hourly funding rates from April 2025 will be communicated in the new year.

The Handi App

The HANDi App is designed to help parents and carers know what to do when their baby or child is unwell - whether that's looking after them at home, taking them to see a GP, using the NHS 111 service, or visiting an urgent care service. It has been developed and approved by local NHS paediatricians and other healthcare professionals.

Content for Early Years newsletters, websites and social media is below. Please share widely with your parents and staff via websites, newsletters, text messaging and social media.

The HANDi App - your first port of call when your baby or child is under the weather

It's the time of year when bugs can play on your mind. If your baby or child is unwell, HANDi will ask you questions about their condition to help you decide the best course of action - and with all the advice on HANDi developed and approved by NHS paediatricians and other healthcare professionals, you can rest assured that you're getting the best possible advice. It includes the most common childhood illnesses including diarrhoea, vomiting and high temperature.

You can find out more here [HANDi App: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System](#) and download the App for free on iOS or Android devices.

Recruitment Reminder

Please don't forget that we can include any staff vacancies you are currently advertising via the WCF Facebook and LinkedIn pages. Please email ChSComms@worcestershire.gov.uk with the following information if you wish to make use of this service:

- Job title
- Location
- Hours
- Brief description of role
- Link to your setting for more information and/or details of how to apply
- Closing date

Early Years Bulletin: National News and Reminders

Ofsted Annual Report 2023/24

On 5th December 2024, Ofsted published their annual report, "[The annual report of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2023/24](#)", which highlights the importance of high quality early education, particularly for the most vulnerable children.

Research into barriers to take-up of Early Education Entitlements for disadvantaged children

A new [research study](#) has been published identifying a range of barriers that prevent disadvantaged children in England from accessing their early years funding entitlement. There is consistent evidence about the benefit of early education for children's development, however a substantial minority of children, in particular those from a disadvantaged background, are missing out of their 15-hour entitlement.

The new study explores why some families do not take up their child's entitlement and sets out actions that can be taken to increase take-up and reduce inequalities in participation.

More information about the report can be found here: [New research reveals barriers to take-up of early education entitlements for disadvantaged children - Coram Group : Coram Group](#)

Best Start in Life: The prime areas of learning and what our research means for childminders

Ofsted are delivering a webinar, specifically for childminders, to discuss:

- The importance of the prime areas of learning
- What a curriculum is for the prime areas
- How we look at the prime areas on inspection
- The top 10 takeaway points from our research

The webinar is being held on Monday 16th December 7pm – 8pm. Places must be booked in advance: [Register to attend](#)

Support for parents to access their child's UK eVisa

The UK Government is replacing physical immigration documents with eVisas, a digital proof of immigration status.

Parents and guardians of children who are not British or Irish citizens, and whose children have either a biometric residence permit (BRP) card expiring on 31 December 2024, or a passport with an indefinite leave to remain ink stamp or vignette sticker, should take action to access their eVisa now, and do so on behalf of their children too.

An eVisa cannot be lost or stolen and can be accessed online by visa holders at any time to prove their rights in the UK. It's free and their immigration status won't be affected.

You can find a range of shareable eVisa communications materials, including factsheets and social media content in the eVisa [Partner Pack](#).

Early Years Bulletin: Out of School Provision

Breakfast Club Early Adopters

The DfE have now opened applications for schools with primary-aged pupils to apply to become an early adopter of the universal free breakfast club programme. From April 2025, up to 750 schools will be funded to provide access to a free, universal breakfast club lasting at least 30 minutes that includes food. Early adopter schools will be central to shaping plans for national rollout.

[Applications](#) are being accepted until Friday 20th December, with the outcome of the application expected to be communicated in January 2025.

Wraparound Programme Funding

Are you considering opening or expanding before and after school provision?

Funding is available to:

- Create new wraparound provision.
- Expand existing wraparound provision, creating additional places and/or increasing your childcare offer.
- Remove identified delivery barriers.

Please note that due to changes in the national childcare agenda, funding for 2025/26 is no longer guaranteed. If you require funding to expand or create a wraparound offer, we urge you to apply as soon as possible; delivery of the project is expected to commence as soon as funding is awarded.

[Wraparound Funding Application Form Autumn 2024](#)

Support is available from the Early Years and Childcare Team, please contact Sharon Jones by emailing Wraparound@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Early Years Bulletin: Safeguarding

Grant Funding for Trauma Kits

Organisations and groups across Worcestershire can now apply for funding to obtain a life-saving trauma kit, thanks to a new grant offered by our Public Health Team.

A trauma kit is similar to a first aid kit and is designed for anyone to use. It is equipped with trauma dressings, and tourniquets to help control bleeding for casualties before the paramedics arrive. All instructions are given in attached leaflets so that no prior training is needed, and anyone can use them in an emergency and potentially save a life.

Trauma kits are already available in Worcestershire County Council's main libraries. Through this new grant, other organisations can now apply to have kits installed at their premises.

This initiative also supports preparations for the forthcoming Martyn's Law (The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill), which requires businesses and organisations to adopt best practices in protecting people during emergencies and support us all to keep the public in Worcestershire safe.

Applications will be open until 31 March 2025. To apply for a trauma kit complete the [online Trauma Kit Request form](#).

More information about the trauma kits and the new Protection of Premises Bill is available on our [website](#).

Early Years Bulletin: News from the Inclusion Team

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Early Years Inclusion Team.

Welcome to Louise Oland

I would like to introduce myself as Interim Principal Educational Psychologist and Head of Inclusion Support Services, from January, when Louisa Jones will be leaving Worcestershire County Council and taking up a promoted post in another Local Authority. Louisa will be missed and has made a significant positive impact on the Early Years since being in post.

I will follow Louisa's lead and be continuing the work she has started. I look forward to working with you all, and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on:
loland@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Early Years SEND Training, Webcasts and Support

We are looking to evaluate the effectiveness and usefulness of Worcestershire County Council Inclusion Support Service training and webcasts, and as part of this, we are asking for **early years settings/providers** to complete the following survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/XJGSDJd1uq>

We ask that this survey is completed by **Thursday 23rd January** so we can collate and evaluate responses.

Thank you in advance for your time and participation in helping us to improve our training, webcasts and written advice/support sheets.

Early Years Inclusion Team Helpline

The Early Years Inclusion Team helpline operates:

- Every Tuesday & Thursday afternoon (term time only) between 1pm – 3pm there will an Inclusion Officer able to take your phone calls.
- The remaining times within the week, someone may answer, or we ask that you leave a voicemail for us to get back to you.

Inclusion helpline and answer machine: 01905 843099

Inclusion helpline email: eyinclusion@worcestershire.gov.uk

Follow us on [Facebook](#) for updates

Early Years Inclusion [website](#)

EY Inclusion Team Website

We have been working hard to revamp our website so that it is more user friendly following your feedback, take a look at our [Early Years Inclusion website](#).

EY Annual Reviews

We recognise there is a need for additional training about Annual Reviews in the Early Years (now that we are seeing EHCPs earlier for children) and so we have developed training and updated the [WCC Annual Review webpage with Early Years Information](#).

Attend our next Annual Review training to find out more!

Annual Review of EHCPs, 13/05/2025, course code 90068

When do we need to complete an Annual Review in the Early Years?

[SEN CoP: Reviewing an EHCP page 198](#)

Reviews of EHC plans for children aged 0 to 5

Local authorities should consider reviewing an EHC plan for a child under five at least every three to six months to ensure that the provision continues to be appropriate. Such reviews would complement the duty to carry out a review at least annually but may be streamlined and not necessarily require the attendance of the full range of professionals, depending on the needs of the child. The child's parent must be fully consulted on any proposed changes to the EHC plan and made aware of their right to appeal to the Tribunal.

For booking information and details of other courses available, please see the training section below.

Early Years Bulletin: Training

If you encounter any issues when booking courses via CPD, please contact the Training Team directly via 01905 844420 or workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Early Years Update Meetings: Spring 2024

An opportunity to hear the latest Early Years news on policy, Ofsted and best practice within the sector.

Childminders (The childminder sessions also include the SENCo Cluster meeting)

- 13 February 2025, 7pm to 8.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10273 / 85140

Out of School Providers (Save the date – will shortly be available on CPD)

- 11 February 2025, 7pm to 8:30pm, virtual delivery

Group Settings (All group-based provision including school nurseries)

- 12 February 2025, 6.30pm to 8pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10272 / 85143
- 14 February 2025, 10am to 11.30am virtual delivery, course code: EY 10272 / 85144

Cost: Free

To book: via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and course code. *Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.*

Early Years Inclusion Training

The Early Years Inclusion Team are offering all of their training during 2024/25 for free. The following courses are all available to book:

- Annual Reviews of EHCP's - course code 10496
- Autism in the Early Years - course code 10003
- How to complete an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) - course code 10495
- Individual Provision Maps (IPMs) and Smart Outcomes - course code 10494
- SENCo Forum/clusters - course code 10160
- SEND in the Early Years - course code 10493
- Training for New SENCo's - course code 10156
- Transition in the Early Years - course code 10168
- Webcast: How to write an Individual Support Plan - course code 10084
- What is the SCERTS approach for EYFS - course code 10385

Further details of each course can be found in the [Early Years training directory](#) or alternatively via [CPD – Courses Search](#) using the course code.

To book: via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and course code.

Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.